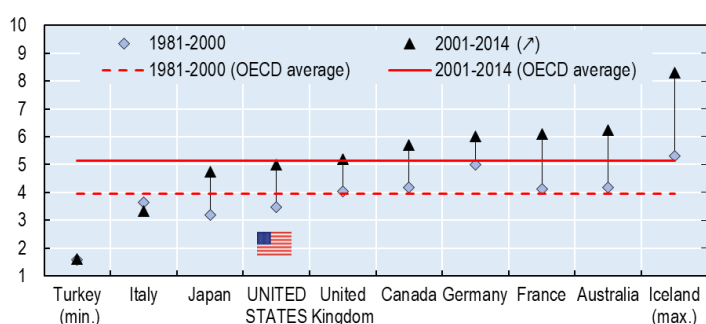




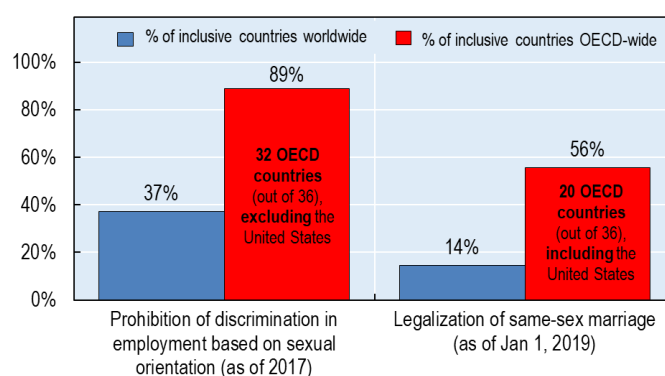
The 2019 edition of *Society at a Glance* examines trends in social well-being across the OECD. It features a special chapter on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people: their numbers, how they fare in terms of their economic situation and well-being, and what policies can improve LGBT inclusivity. It also includes a special chapter based on the 2018 OECD Risks That Matter Survey on people's perceptions of social and economic risks and the extent to which they think governments address those risks. The publication also presents 25 indicators on general context, self-sufficiency, equity, health and social cohesion.

Fig.1. Despite improvements, acceptance of homosexuality remains limited



Note: Acceptance of homosexuality is measured on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means that homosexuality is never justifiable and 10 means that it is always justifiable. Source: [Figure 1.6 of OECD Society at a Glance 2019].

Fig.2. There is still a long way before sexual and gender minorities meet full-fledged legal recognition, and the United States is no exception



Source: [Figure 1.18 of OECD Society at a Glance 2019].

A SPOTLIGHT ON LGBT PEOPLE

The United States is one of the 15 OECD countries that include a question on self-identification as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, and one of only three OECD countries that collect information on gender identity in at least one of their nationally representative surveys. The share of LGBT people in the United States is sizeable. According to the Gallup Daily tracking survey, people who self-identify as LGBT represent 4.5% of the adult population in 2017. This share is on the rise, up from 3.5% in 2012. Increasing disclosure of an LGBT identity is likely to continue in the future since it is driven by younger cohorts [Figure 1.5 of the OECD publication *Society at a Glance 2019*].

Attitudes toward LGBT people are improving worldwide and have consistently been more positive in OECD countries than elsewhere. However, there remains substantial room for progress. The United States is no exception: US citizens are only halfway to full social acceptance of homosexuality, scoring nearly five on a 1-to-10 acceptance scale (in line with the average OECD score) [Figure 1 above]. Moreover, only a minority of US respondents (43%) would accept that a child dresses and

expresses herself/himself as a child of the other gender [Figure 1.8, Panel B].

Low acceptance of LGBT people puts them at risk of discrimination. Representative survey data reveal that LGBT people are penalised with respect to employment status and labour earnings [Figure 1.12]. For instance, the employment rate of transgender people in the United States is 12% lower than that of cisgender people – the antonym of transgender people. Experimental data confirm that this penalty at least partly reflects labour market discrimination: with the same curriculum vitae, transgender US applicants are 1.5 times less likely to be invited to a job interview than cisgender US applicants.

Representative survey data also point to widespread psychological distress among LGBT individuals. LGBT people in the United States are three times as likely to have experienced a major depressive episode in the year preceding the survey [Figure 1.14]. Lower mental health among LGBT people at least partly flows from stigma. By living in a social environment that largely views heterosexuality and congruence between sex at birth and gender identity as the only way of being normal, LGBT people experience stress not undergone by heterosexual and cisgender individuals. In the United States, same-sex

marriage policies caused a reduction by nearly 15% of suicide attempts among adolescents who self-identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual.

A range of policies can help improve LGBT inclusivity. Making LGBT individuals and the penalties they face visible in national statistics is a prerequisite for their inclusion, suggesting that the United States could collect information on sexual orientation and gender identity in a broader range of surveys, including the US labour force survey and the US Census. Legally prohibiting anti-LGBT discrimination and ensuring equal rights for LGBT individuals is also essential to improve their situation. While the United States is among the 20 OECD countries that has legalised same-sex marriage, it does not prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation [Figure 2 above]. Finally, educating people in countering their unconscious bias is a key component of any policy package aiming to better LGBT inclusion. Evidence shows that these interventions can be highly effective, even when they are short.

OECD Risk that Matter survey suggests Americans want more support from government

Americans today feel financially insecure. 48% of Americans list “struggling to meet daily expenses despite working” as a top-three risk in the next couple of years [Figure 3.1]. When looking beyond the next decade, 71% of Americans identify financial security in old age as one of their top-three risks [Figure 3.2].

Most Americans feel they have little influence over public policy, though they are more optimistic than people elsewhere: 27% of Americans agree that the government incorporates the views of people like them when designing policies, compared to an average of 16% across countries [Figure 3.5]. **A majority of Americans want government to do more to help them in times of need:** 57% say the government should do more to safeguard their economic and social security, 23% say government should continue providing as it does now, and only 9% of Americans want government to do less [Figure 3.6].

OVERVIEW OF OTHER SOCIAL INDICATORS

Affordable housing is a challenge

Less than one in four US households (23%) own their dwelling outright, one of the lowest shares in the OECD [Figure 6.13]. **The housing cost burden is particularly important for low-income people.** More than half of all low-income households in the United States (52%) spent more than 40% of disposable income on their mortgage in 2016, the highest share among OECD countries. The

same indicator increases to 57% for low-income renters, fourth highest in the OECD ranking [Figure 6.14].

Incomes are high but so too are inequality and poverty

Median disposable household income is high in the United States, with only Norway, Switzerland and Luxembourg performing better [Figure 4.1]. However, **income inequality in the United States is also high** with only Turkey, Mexico and Chile performing worse [Figure 6.1]. The United States has the **highest concentration of income and wealth amongst the top 10%** of households across the OECD [Figure 6.2]. The United States also has the highest relative poverty rate: 18% of Americans live with less than USD 1 440 per month in 2016, i.e. half the median equivalised disposable income [Figure 6.4].

High health spending, but low life expectancy

The United States spends far more than every other OECD country on health. At around USD 10 500 per capita in 2017, health spending is two-and-a-half times the OECD average, and 25% higher than Switzerland, the next biggest spender [Figure 7.4]. In spite of high health expenditures, average life expectancy, at 78.6 years, is now two years below the OECD average of 80.6 years. Four decades ago, the difference in life expectancy between the United States and the OECD average was less than one year [Figures 7.1 & 7.3].

High reporting of violence against women

More than one third of US women report having experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetimes. This rate is the second highest after Turkey, and well above the OECD average of around one in five women [Figure 8.7]. Social acceptance of domestic violence against women is also high: 11% of American women say that a husband may be justified in hitting or beating his wife – above the OECD average of 8% [Figure 8.8].

Limited internet usage among youth

Despite a regular and significant increase during the last decade, internet is not universally used in the United States. With 82% of the population using the internet in 2017, fewer people use the internet in the United States than in OECD countries on average (86%) [Figure 8.13]. **Internet usage is surprisingly low among youth** and with only 85% of 16-24-year olds using the internet, the United States ranks lowest among all OECD countries.

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